



Jeff Landry  
Governor

# State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
DRUG POLICY

Dr. Shayla Polk, LCSW  
Executive Director

Cortalya Muse, M.S.,  
B.S.  
Prevention Systems  
Manager

## DRUG POLICY BOARD

October 24, 2024; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

LA State Capitol Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Press Room, 900 N. Third St.,  
Baton Rouge

### MINUTES

#### Call to Order

Dr. Shayla Polk, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and Chair of the Drug Policy Board, called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM

#### Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Polk welcomed everyone to the fourth quarterly meeting of the Drug Policy Board. She asked everyone to introduce themselves and announced that the DPB had a couple of new members and that the board was almost filled. She then requested that Voting and Of-Counsel members, stakeholders, and members of the public introduce themselves. After completing introductions, Dr. Polk announced that the quorum was met with 13 members present. A list of all members and stakeholders who attended the meeting is provided and included at the document's end.

#### Old Business

- *Review and approve minutes from previous meeting*

Dr. Polk asked everyone to refer to the minutes emailed before the meeting. While doing that, she reminded everyone that a copy of the minutes was in their packets. After a moment of silence to review, Dr. Polk asked if there were any edits or amendments to be made. A motion to approve was raised. Dr. Allison Smith and Mr. Rusty Fornea voted. All who were present agreed with the motion. None disagreed. None abstained.

#### New Business

- Prevention Systems Committee and State Epidemiological Workgroup Overview- Dr. Shayla Polk, Executive Director, Office of Drug Policy.*** Dr. Shayla Polk, Executive Director of the Office of Drug Policy, opened the discussion by paying tribute to Judge Jules Edwards, recognizing his profound contributions to the community and the field of drug policy. Dr. Polk noted that Judge Edwards' services would be held on Saturday, October 26, 2024, and that the Governor had signed an executive order for flags to be flown at half-staff in his honor. She also mentioned her attendance at the

services to deliver the executive order.

Lisa Freeman, Executive Director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, shared her admiration for both Dr. Polk and Judge Edwards, commending their dedication and impact on public safety and drug policy in Louisiana.

Dr. Polk transitioned to the meeting's core topic, emphasizing the importance of the Prevention Systems Committee (PSC) and State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) to the Drug Policy Board. She highlighted the challenge of not achieving a quorum and stressed the essential role of these workgroups in advancing state initiatives. Dr. Polk reviewed organizational charts and agency roles, stating that the Office of Drug Policy (ODP) will send emails in early 2025, requesting each member agency to designate representatives for the PSC and SEW.

She reiterated that without a quorum, the ODP cannot produce new briefs or take necessary actions, urging collaboration to ensure state progress. The ODP will follow up within two weeks to solidify these plans.

Dr. Aimee Moles, representing SREC, provided a brief history of the State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW) and explained its purpose: analyzing data systems and understanding how they interact. She noted that data could be accessed via the Picard system, emphasizing its potential for supporting SEW's work.

Dr. Allison Smith from the Board of Regents (BOR) expressed enthusiasm about the new Picard system, highlighting its ability to collect comprehensive data. However, she pointed out gaps in the system, particularly regarding data accessibility and the need to determine who can access it. She also inquired about the system's capability to generate visual maps to show data distribution across Louisiana.

Catherine Childers from the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission shared her perspective on the roles of SEW and the Prevention Systems Committee (PSC). She informed the board that both workgroups hold virtual meetings via Zoom and were specifically established to analyze data and present findings to the Drug Policy Board to inform recommendations.

Dr. Leslie Brougham-Freeman from the Office of Behavioral Health emphasized that SEW's role includes identifying data gaps. She stressed the importance of agencies collaborating as a group to address these gaps and enhance the overall effectiveness of the Drug Policy Board's initiatives.

**B. *Presentation with Open Discussion: Behavioral Health in Louisiana's Higher Education Institutions: From Prevention to Recovery- Dr. Allison Smith Assistant Commissioner for Student Health and Wellness Louisiana Board of Regents.***

Dr. Allison Smith's presentation on behavioral health in Louisiana's higher education institutions focused on the critical need for a comprehensive approach to substance misuse, particularly opioids. Through the One Pill Can Kill campaign, Dr. Smith raised awareness of the dangers of counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl, which have led to fatal overdoses. She shared alarming data from the Louisiana Department of Health's Opioid Response Plan, revealing that 6.8% of students use opioids for pain management, 14.5% misuse stimulants, and 7.8% use sedatives. These statistics underscore the importance of preventive measures to educate students on the risks and dangers associated with these substances.

Beyond prevention, Dr. Smith emphasized the need for intervention and recovery

programs at higher education institutions. She advocated for a coordinated effort between universities, public health agencies, and community organizations to provide support and resources for students facing substance use disorders. Faculty and staff are essential in identifying at-risk students and offering timely assistance. By integrating drug education into orientation programs, ensuring access to counseling and recovery services, and promoting awareness campaigns, colleges can foster a supportive environment for students. This holistic approach from prevention to recovery can help students make healthier choices and access the care they need to overcome substance misuse challenges. For more resources on campus drug prevention, visit Campus Drug Prevention.

**C. Presentation with Open Discussion: Louisiana's Rising Mushroom Poisoning Incidents: A Growing Concern - Rebecca L. Chiasson, M.S.**

**Louisiana State Police Crime Lab-** Rebecca L. Chiasson, M.S., from the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab, presented on the growing concern of mushroom poisoning incidents in Louisiana, with a focus on psilocin-containing mushrooms. She explained how these mushrooms, particularly hallucinogenic varieties, are increasingly being disguised to resemble everyday products like caramels and fun-gals, making them harder to identify and posing a significant risk to consumers. Chiasson also shared a handout featuring images of Diamon Shroomz-brand microdosing chocolate bars, cones, and gummies (June 2024), which are marketed as novelty edible products.

These products are often sold with the promise of health benefits or recreational use but may contain psilocin, a potent hallucinogenic compound that can cause serious physical and psychological effects, especially if consumed in excess or by individuals who are unaware of the risks. This trend of incorporating psilocin-containing mushrooms into consumable products like chocolate bars and gummies further complicates the public's ability to distinguish between safe and harmful substances. Chiasson highlighted the increasing number of poisoning cases resulting from accidental consumption of these disguised products, particularly among younger adults and those who may be unfamiliar with the dangers of wild mushrooms. The discussion underscored the importance of fostering a better understanding of these hazards in the public domain to ensure safer practices and reduce the likelihood of accidental poisoning in Louisiana communities.

**Other Business**

**A. Office of Drug Policy updates**

Office of Drug Policy will attend the 2024 Health Summit at Pennington Biomedical Center. Dr. Polk will be a part of the discussion panel. We are also preparing for the final Taskforce on Impaired Driving meeting to be held on November 6, 2024

**B. Member agency updates**

**Rebecca Chiasson, M.S.,** with the State Police Crime Lab, shared that her agency has expanded the blood panel again. It can be conducted during regular searches and will be more robust.

**Dr. Allison Smith-** Louisiana Board of Regents announced that they are excited to work with the Louisiana Department of Health and Senator Regina Barrow

**Public Comments**

No Public Comments

***Upcoming Meetings***

- State Epidemiology Workgroup- February 27, 2025, @10 AM- 12 PM Virtual/Teams
- Task Force on Impaired Driving February 5, 2025 (10 AM- 12 PM) LA Capitol 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Press Room
- Prevention Systems Committee- March 5, 2025, Virtual/Zoom/Teams
- Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Council- January 9, 2025
- Drug Policy Board- January 30, 2025 (10 AM- 12 PM) LA Capitol 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Press Room

**Adjournment**

Dr. Shayla Polk made the motion to adjourn the meeting, it was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dr. Allison Smith. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM

## MEETING ATTENDEES

### MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance	Proxy
Alcohol industry representative			
Attorney General's Office	Michael Dupree, Public Protection Division (John Kelley Proxy-Complex Litigation Officer)	Yes	
Board of Pharmacy	Joe Fontenot	Yes	
District Court Judge	Shayna Beevers Morvant	Yes	
Federal agency with AOD ed/ treat/prev responsibilities	Vacant	--	
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Dr. Shayla Polk, Director and Chair of the Drug Policy Board	Yes	
House member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Stephanie Berault, LA State Representative, Dist. 76	Yes	
Louisiana Commission on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse	Vacant/Comm does not exist	--	
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement	Linda Gautier	No	
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services	Dr. Rebecca Hook	Yes	
Louisiana Department of Education	Michael Comeaux	Yes	
Louisiana Department of Health	Quinetta Womack	Yes	
Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections	Blake LeBlanc	Yes	
Louisiana District Attorneys Association	J. Collin Simms	Yes	
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman, JD	Yes	
Louisiana Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control	Ernest Legier, JD, Commissioner (Deatrice Henderson as Proxy)	No	
Louisiana Public Defenders Board	Remy Starns, JD	No	
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Shannon Dirmann	No	
Louisiana State Police	Rebecca Chiasson	Yes	
National Guard	Lt. Colonel Beverly Coutto, Coordinator, Counterdrug Program (MSgt Amy Thomas as proxy)	No	
Physician	Peter W. Croughan, MD, LA Department of Health	No	
Private organization involved in SA prevention	Dan Schneider, RPH Tunnel of Hope	Yes	
Senate member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Senator Bob Owens- District 1	No	

**OF-COUNSEL MEMBERS**

<b>Of – Council Member Agency</b>	<b>Appointee/Designee</b>	<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Proxy</b>
O'Brien House	Emily George Tilley, LCSW-BACS, Director	No	
Louisiana Board of Regents	Dr. Allison Smith	Yes	
North Louisiana Criminalistics Laboratory	Joseph O. Jones System Director	No	
LA State Board of Medical Examiners	Dr. Vincent Culotta, Executive Director	No	
Baton Rouge Field	Steven Hofer, Asst. Special Agent in Charge	No	
ADAPT, Inc.	Thomas R. "Rusty" Fornea, Executive Director	Yes	
Seymore D'Fair Foundation -Ofc	Dara Lemoine-Johnson (Craig Wiles - proxy)	Yes	
15th JDC -Ofc	Judge Valerie Garret - District Court	No	

**ATTENDEES**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
Catherine Childers	Louisiana Highway Safety Commission
David Johnson	Seymore's Foundation
Leslie Brougham Freeman –	LDH/OBH
Tranettea Williams	OPH/BHI
Tunde Animashaun	OMV
Aimee Moles	LSU/SREC
Jana Pounds	ADAPT
Johanna Braud	LASC
Andrew Burns	LSU SREC
<b>Cortalya Muse</b>	<b>Governor's Office - Staff</b>